

		Policy & Procedures			No. 5.06	
		Subject:				
		Traffic Collision Response				
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CALEA STANDARDS
61.2.1 41.2.4 82.2.1
61.2.2

I. General Considerations and Guidelines

Due to an ever-increasing number of vehicles and licensed drivers, traffic collisions will remain an unfortunate reality for a significant segment of the population. The police role in this problem is varied. Aid to the injured, traffic control, investigation, and enforcement and collision mitigation are just some of the areas upon which the police will have an impact. An adequate response, knowledgeable performance, and preventive efforts can go a long way to decrease damage to property and minimize bodily injury.

II. Policy

To ensure quality service to the motoring public, officers shall respond to the scene of a traffic collision whenever appropriate and assist as necessary.

III. Procedures 61.2.2 A-H

This Department shall respond to the scene of a traffic collision involving any of the following circumstances:

- Death or injury; (c)
- Hit & Run/Leaving the scene (Motor vehicle crash or property damage);
- Impairment of any operator due to alcohol or drugs;
- Damage to public vehicles or property; (g)
- Hazardous materials (h)
- Identify and deal with fire hazards (d)
- Disturbances between principals (participants); (i)
- Major traffic congestion as a result of the collision; (j)
- Damage to vehicles to the extent that towing is required; (l)
- Property damage collisions;
- When any person or principal advises the station via telephone or other means that a collision has occurred at a specific location;

It shall be the responsibility of the Shift Supervisor to decide whether response to a collision scene should be suspended due to extreme weather conditions or other situations that would cause response to be delayed considerably or rendered impossible.

IV. Collision Scene Duties

A. Reporting: 61.2.1 (1A)

The patrol officer dispatched to a motor vehicle collision on a public way shall be required to completely fill out and file a Registry of Motor Vehicle Collision Report. While at the scene, and when it's permissible, the reporting officer shall forward the vehicle and operator information to Dispatch where it shall be entered into the computer aided dispatch (CAD). The reporting officer will be responsible for completing the collision report.

If the collision is on private property, the officer will use his/her judgment as to whether or not a report is needed. Any preliminary investigation will always require a report (see below).

B. Investigation: 61.2.1 (1B)

Many collision reports will only require the basic information regarding the facts that precipitated the incident. However, others will require investigation according to some or all of the procedures outlined in this directive. A written report is required when traffic collisions require investigative measures. The following types of collisions shall require *preliminary* investigative measures (therefore a report is needed);

Those involving:

- Death or personal injury; **61.2.1**
- Property damage; **61.2.1**
- Hit and run; **61.2.1**
- Operator impairment due to alcohol or drugs; **61.2.1**

- Any vehicle carrying materials which would ordinarily be considered hazardous or dangerous (i.e.; vehicles carrying toxic liquid or gas, combustible materials, explosives, etc.), or those involving private property where hazardous materials were affected, such as a gasoline pump being damaged; **61.2.1**

- Occurrences on private property where police involvement began in our jurisdictional boundaries; **61.2.1**

- A flagrant moving violation on the part of one or more of the operators or be caused by defective equipment on or in a vehicle or by circumstances which impede the safe operation of a vehicle;

C. Scene Supervision: 61.2.3

If a Shift Supervisor is not required or if he/she is unable to be at the scene, the patrol officer, if assigned by dispatch, will be in charge of the scene. That officer will be responsible for the investigation, filing the required reports and will ensure that all required tasks are carried out. **61.2.3 (A,B)**

The first responding officer will help to identify and deal with injured persons. However, scene safety is paramount. He/she will also report back to dispatch if an ambulance (or more than one) is needed. All officers will be expected to administer primary first aid care in accordance with Department training. However, this authority excludes the responsibility of advanced treating and removal of injured parties. The authority rests with members of the Canton Fire Department or other qualified responding EMS personnel. **61.2.3 C**

The first responding officer will alert dispatch to summons the Canton Fire Department to the scene of all collisions involving hazardous, flammable or dangerous materials whenever our agency is in charge of the scene. Once a hazardous concern has been identified, only properly equipped Firefighters will be allowed to enter areas where hazardous materials are suspected. Police officers shall be responsible for keeping the area free of onlookers, pedestrians and vehicular traffic. The officer in charge from the Canton Fire Department, the Deputy Chief (if on scene; if not the Shift Lieutenant or the Shift Supervisor) shall coordinate evacuation needs. **61.2.3 (D,H)**

V. Response and Scene Safety

A. Assigning Units:

Upon receiving a call, the patrol unit assigned to the area where a collision occurs will be sent to the scene by a Dispatching Officer. If another unit is in the area, they may also respond to assist. If it appears, based on callers reports, that the collision is serious and/or is located in a location that could pose a risk to the operator(s) and other motorists, a second cruiser will be dispatched. The first officer on scene shall make a brief radio report of the circumstances to Dispatch and request assistance if any is required. Additional units may be authorized by the Dispatch Officer.

B. Positioning the Patrol Vehicle:

To prevent further collisions or damage, the first responding police cruiser shall be parked in such a manner as to protect the scene from further collision. **61.2.3 F**

- The cruiser should be parked far enough away so that if struck, it will not be pushed into the collision vehicles.
- The cruiser should be positioned so that oncoming traffic will be routed in such a way as to avoid the collision vehicles.
- The emergency lights and flashers shall be activated.
- Additional officers shall direct traffic as required; including blocking off streets or rerouting vehicles if necessary.
- First responders should communicate directions to others responding if required.

C. Warning Oncoming Traffic:

As soon as possible, the officer shall don their reflective vest or their cruiser jacket or raincoat with reflective side shown. If using traffic cones or other barricades to reroute traffic around a scene, they should be positioned far enough from the scene to allow traffic to safely and expeditiously come together into a line.

D. Injured Parties:

After making immediate precautionary measures to ensure that the collision will not involve other vehicles, the first responding officer's primary duty is to give prompt attention to identify and assist injured persons. **61.2.3 C**

E. Further Responsibilities:

Depending on the situation, the reporting officer shall be responsible for the following:

1. An ambulance shall be requested to transport all injured persons.
2. As soon as possible, request a response from a detective to photograph and measure the collision (when applicable);
3. In fatal/serious collisions, request the assistance of the Mass. State Police Reconstruction Team.
4. Request tow trucks as needed.
5. Call for the Fire Department if extrication equipment is required or if oil/gas has spilled.
6. If the oil/gas is going to be washed from the roadway, ensure that a detective is made aware so that he/she can collect measure, photograph or analyze any evidence, if it is safe to do so, before the roadway is cleaned.
7. Assure that by-standers are not interfering with the scene or jeopardizing their own safety by standing in the roadway.
8. Gather personal articles of the injured for safekeeping and secure them in a manner consistent with Department Policy. **61.2.3 K**
9. Assure that provisions for transportation are made for those stranded by the collision.

VI. Investigation

A. Preliminary Investigation:

As soon as reasonably possible, the preliminary investigation should be conducted with the following information being recorded: **61.2.3 E**

1. Date, time and place of the collision;
2. Name, address and license number(s) of the operator(s) involved;
3. Make, model and registration number(s) of the vehicles involved;
4. Name and address of the vehicle owner(s) and insurance company;
5. Name and address of injured persons, description of visible injuries and medical facility transported to;
6. Name, address and contact number(s) of witnesses and any statements made;
7. Name and address of all persons in vehicle(s).

B. Additional Information: 61.2.3 E

A record shall be made (including photographs, if applicable) in accordance with policy, of any physical evidence and:

1. Type of roadway and width;
2. Road conditions (holes, ruts, curves, conditions, construction, etc.);
3. Weather and lighting;
4. Traffic control signs or signals;
5. Identification of marks on the roadway;
6. Direction of travel of involved vehicles;
7. Point of impact;
8. Position of vehicles after impact and whether moved;
9. Damage to the vehicles.

C. Follow-up Collision Investigation: 61.2.1 (1C); 61.2.4

In cases requiring a more thorough investigation, the Shift Supervisor can request other resources they deem necessary. Police responsibility will continue until the injured have been cared for; damaged vehicles have been removed; the roadway is clear of debris and traffic flow is returned to normal. Follow-up procedures by a detective and the reporting officer may include:

- Crime scene processing to secure evidence;
- Photos and/or video of collision scene;
- Collecting off-scene data;
- Locate witnesses/interview
- Obtain/record formal statements from witnesses;
- Reconstruct collision, using expert and technical assistance;
- View local camera recordings for evidence;
- Prepare formal reports to support criminal charges.

D. Reporting:

1. The Registry of Motor Vehicles Collision Report will be completed in IMC and sent to the proper authority.
2. Department Reports: If the collision required investigation that resulted in further department action by this Agency, a written report will be entered into the computer. The report along with all supplemental sheets will be completed and placed in the appropriate disposition box (Shift Supervisor for approval, Accident Report Officer, Prosecuting Officer) along with the collision report and any other

documents (such as citation copies, complaint application, technical diagrams, etc.). All necessary reports (with the exception of a follow-up report) will be completed by the reporting officer before he/she leaves their shift.

3. Providing operators with information: All officers should carry a supply of Motor Vehicle Exchange Forms with them while on patrol. These forms have three copies. Except where exigent circumstances prohibit, the form is to be filled out at the scene by the investigating officer. A copy shall be given to each operator. This procedure will help eliminate delays in the filing of operator's reports and will provide the investigating officer with information needed to complete his/her report.

VII. Collision involving a police cruiser or motorcycle

1. In the event a police vehicle is involved in a collision, the Shift Supervisor is to be notified right away.
2. The Shift Supervisor will handle the investigation, if needed, including photographing the scene.
3. The Shift Supervisor will be responsible for completing the Registry of Motor Vehicles Collision Report.
4. An incident report (OF#) will be assigned to and completed by the Shift Supervisor.
5. The Shift Supervisor will notify the Chief of Police of the collision as soon as reasonably possible.